DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 346 924 JC 920 354

AUTHOR Witter, Susan
TITLE Re Thinking the Public Sector Role in Training: A B.C. College's Response.
INSTITUTION University Coll. of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford (British Columbia).
PUB DATE Jul 92
NOTE 11p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Change Strategies; Community Colleges; Educational Change; Educational Economics; Educational Legislation; *Federal Aid; Financial Policy; Financial Problems; *Financial Support; Foreign Countries; Government School Relationship; *Job Training; Politics of Education; *Private Sector; *Privatization; School Business Relationship; Two Year Colleges; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS *British Columbia

ABSTRACT

Prior to 1985, the British Columbia (Canada) community colleges relied heavily on institutional seat purchases (direct funding) to support ongoing vocational programs and, to a lesser extent, to implement new training programs. With the introduction of the Canada Job Strategy in 1985, many of the seat purchases were reduced in favor of indirect purchase from the private sector. British Columbia's largest community college, Vancouver Community College (VCC), saw a reduction in federally sponsored vocational programs from 60% of total programs in 1981 to 12% of total programs in 1991. To keep the college responsive to the needs of its community, VCC redirected its approach to accessing indirect funding. Actions taken by VCC included the following: (1) diversifying the type of training provided; (2) bidding in partnership with private trainers; (3) introducing flexibility in the delivery options of short-term training contracts; (4) accepting small contracts; (5) promoting the importance of accessing third party contracts with the private sector; and (6) keeping current with changing federal initiatives. Shifts in federal training policy have included reductions in federal seat purchases in colleges; the assumption by employers of a greater role in training; a greater shift to indirect funding through local training boards and private sector groups; and the introduction of a competitive marketplace in training. In order to cope with these changes, colleges must establish and/or improve relationships with the private sector and be responsive, flexible, competitive, open to new partnerships and competitive bidding, and understand the implications of federal legislation and policy. (JMC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED346924

RE THINKING THE PUBLIC SECTOR ROLE IN TRAINING

A B.C. COLLEGE'S RESPONSE

July 1992

Susan Witter
Dean of Continuing Education
University College of the Fraser Valley
Abbotsford, British Columbia

IC 920 354

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. Witter

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

RE THINKING THE PUBLIC SECTOR ROLE IN TRAINING: A B.C. COLLEGE'S RESPONSE

Susan Witter
University College of the Fraser Valley

HISTORY

The Federal Government has had a long and varied history of involvement in labour force training programs in Canada. The first vocational training act in Canada dates back to 1913 with the Agricultural Instruction Act.

It was not until 1960 and the passage of the Technical and Vocational Training Act that the federal government made a quantum leap and assumed a major role in occupational training. The Adult Occupational Training Act of 1967 initiated the federal government's interest in purchasing occupational training programs from the provincially funded educational institutions. This Canada Manpower Training Program in it's prime funded adults in a multitude of language, vocational, basic education and bridging programs.

With each successive piece of federal legislation, up to the National Training Act (NTA) of 1982, the federal government pushed it's way into controlling the responsibility for the provision of occupational training programs for adults.

A new era in federal labour market development began in 1985 with the announcement of the Canada Job Strategy (CJS). CJS represented a dramatic departure from previous training acts, as it explicitly promoted training by the private and voluntary sector. A year after CJS was introduced the federal government announced reductions in the institutional training program (Canada Manpower Training Program). This program allowed for the purchase of "training seats" in vocational programs in public educational institutions, under terms of federal-provincial training agreements. By 1991 colleges in Canada had experienced more than a 50% decline in direct federal purchase of training since 1986. The number of Canadians enroled in federal government sponsored training programs fell dramatically the year the Canada Job Strategy was introduced.

The following table clearly indicates this consistent decline over the six years between 1984 and 1990.

1984/85	236,000	participants
1985/86	201,000	"
1986/87	143,000	"
1987/88	133,000	"
1988/89	126,000	"
1989/90	101,000	"

A review of several important federal government policy documents (1982-1987) gives a fairly consistent rationale as to why the federal government reduced its commitment to the institutional training program, and thus its support of the provinces main infrastructure that implemented occupational training programs. The rationale behind the federal government reduction of support to the province's infrastructure, namely colleges and institutes were:

- provincial education systems were not responsive to changes in Canada's job market and the programs they funded were not connected to actual workplace skills.

- the institutional training program was becoming too rigid and inflexible especially for training programs in the services sector, where job growth was the greatest.

- the federal government wanted to shift its policy to include the private sector as a new training partner so as to introduce an element of competition for the public provincial sector. The federal government thought the provincial public educational institutions were becoming "hidebound and inflexible" and were not responding to the needs of the marketplace.

LABOUR FORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY PRIVATISES TRAINING

Prior to the introduction of CJS in 1985, federal training support to the provinces was overwhelmingly concentrated in the "direct" purchase of seats in the community colleges (institutional training program). An explicit goal under the LFD strategy has been to designate a greater proportion of federal training funds to the "private sector" and less to the public colleges and institutes directly. This shift from direct purchase to indirect purchase where the federal government contracts with a private training school, private contractor, community group or business, has radically changed the roles that colleges play in providing training for the communities they serve. Community colleges were destabilized, particularly the first few years after CJS was introduced (1986-1988) due to the rapid shift away from direct purchase of training.

FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL TRAINING AGREEMENTS INFLUENCE COLLEGE PARTICIPATION IN FEDERAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

The Federal/Provincial Training Agreements signed between the provincial/territorial/federal government's every three to five years attempt to resolve some of the ambiguities and contentious issues between the two levels of government. For example, a number of the provinces have been concerned that certain trends which have characterized federal policy in the last few years, such as an erosion to the established public training infrastructure will, if continued, disrupt the provinces efforts to build a quality training system.

The 1985 and 1991 federal/provincial training agreements have given more latitude to the federal government, for utilizing non public training institutions. The agreements clearly spell out the federal governments reduction to purchasing training in the public training institutions.

First, let us look at the changes that have occurred over the last five years in direct and indirect purchase of training by the federal government in one province, British Columbia.

As you can see from this chart "federal expenditures for direct and indirect training in British Columbia", these significant shifts have allowed the private sector a greater role in the provision of training for employed and unemployed Canadians. While third-party sponsors may themselves buy training at the colleges, these "indirect" purchases have not made up for the decline in direct purchases, with the total amount of federal funds received by the colleges well below pre-CJS levels.

Under the new Federal Provincial agreement on Labour Force Development 1991/92 to 1993/94 direct purchase's are to be reduced a further $8.8m or 28% from the base year 1990/91.

All the above changes in federal government legislation (National Training Act, Canadian Jobs Strategy, Labour Force Development Strategy, Agreement on Labour Force Development with the Provinces) influence the federal policies and priorities for training. This in turn influences the practice of adult education in Canada. The following grid overviews the legislation/policy/practice connection.

A B.C. COLLEGE RESPONSE TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CHANGING POLICY

Prior to 1985 the colleges relied heavily on institutional seat purchases (direct funding) to support ongoing vocational programs, as well to a lesser extent to implement new training programs. At our institution, Fraser Valley College in British Columbia federal seat purchases prior to 1985, were considered "sacred and secure" in automotive parts, electronics, welding, carpentry, drafting, office careers, adult basic education, english language training, homemaker/long term care, dental assistant, and early childhood education. With the introduction of CJS many of the traditional "sacred" seat purchases were reduced in favour of indirect purchase from the private sector. B.C.'s largest community college, Vancouver

FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FOR DIRECT AND INDIRECT TRAINING
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

	Direct Purchase			Indirect Purchase		
	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total
Base Year						
85/86	$52.2M	$4.8M	$57.0M			
CJS Agreement						
86/87	$46.1M	$5.0M	$51.1M	$6.7M	$10.8M	$16.5M
87/88	$39.3M	$4.3M	$43.6M	$4.7M	$ 9.5M	$14.2M
88/89	$31.7M	$3.1M	$34.8M	$4.9M	$ 8.5M	$13.4M
Two Years Extension						
89/90	$31.6M	$3.2M	$34.8M	$4.3M	$ 8.3M	$12.6M
90/91	$31.4M	$3.4M	$34.8M	$4.7M	$ 8.9M	$13.6M
LFD Agreement						
91/92	$29.7M	?	?			
92/93	$25.7M	?	?			
93.94	$22.6M	?	?			

N.B.:

1. Under the Canadian Jobs Strategy (CJS) Training Agreement 1986/87 to 1988/89, Direct Purchases of public training were reduced by $20.5M (40%) from the base year of 1985/86.

2. Under the new Agreement on Labour Force Development (LFD) 1991/92 to 1993/94, government to government purchases (Direct public) are to be reduced by $8.8M (28%) from the base year 1990/91.

July 5, 1991
Colleges and Technical Programs
Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology

Legislation	Policy/ Priority	Practice
National Training Act (1982)	Skills Training	- Institutional training program - new skills training programs in technologies in colleges/institutes. - Rigid full-time definition (25 hours) prevents part-time learning
Canada Jobs Strategy 1985	Equity Groups participation, ie. women, natives, disabled and visible minority	- New initiatives for the four target groups ie., job re-entry programs for women and literacy programs for aboriginal people.
Labour Force Development Strategy (1989)	"Develop a training culture" - employers take on more responsibility for training their own employees. Policy shift to "indirect funding" through third party agents.	Training programs for small business, ie. owner development programs. More business/labour/education partnerships Public sector now has to share its role in training with private and voluntary groups.
Bill C 21 Unemployment Insurance (1991)	UI beneficiaries are permitted to arrange their own training Self employment initiative	Delivery systems will be more flexible. Entrepreneurship emphasized in program offerings.
Federal/Provincial Agreements on Labour Force Development (1991/1992)	Declining support for provinces post-secondary infrastructure	More cost-recovery programs. Entry level training delivered by private sector. Competitive bidding.

Legislation Influences Policy

National Training Act (1982)

↓

Canadian Jobs Strategy (1985)

↓

Federal/Provincial Training Agreement (1985/86)

↓

Labour Force Development Strategy (1989)

↓

Unemployment Insurance Bill C-21 (1991)

↓

Agreement on Labour Force Development with the Provinces (1991/92)

Community College saw a reduction in federally sponsored vocational programs from 60% of total programs in 1981, to 12% of total programs in 1991.

To keep our college responsive to the needs of the community it serves, our Continuing Education Department has had to re-think it's approach to accessing indirect funding. Some of the initiatives that we have taken during the last three years have put us in a better position in terms of our working relationships with our "training partners", namely businesses, voluntary organizations, private trainers and employment and immigration. What then are some of the initiatives we have taken to reposition ourselves to access indirect federal funding?

* trying to diversify in the type of training that we are contracted to provide, so as to access more "third party contracts" from the private sector.

* bidding in partnership with private trainers or voluntary organizations.

* work with college career, technical and vocational departments to introduce some flexibility in the delivery options of short term training contracts so as faculty and facilities can be utilized more effectively.

* start small, take on all types of contracts even $500.00 ones and cultivate these small contracts. We have found that voluntary organizations and small businesses that access federal funding through indirect purchase do come back to us for additional third party contracts.

* promote the importance of accessing "third party" contracts with the private sector, so as to keep the college close to the business community, and it's changing training needs.

* keep current with changing federal initiatives (Canadian Labour Force Development Board initiatives) as changing federal priorities will have impact on the type of training and clients you should target, e.g., older workers, unemployment insurance beneficiaries, language instruction for new Canadian's.

SHIFTS IN FEDERAL TRAINING POLICY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

* continued reductions in federal seat purchases in colleges

* employers to assume a greater role in training

* greater shift to indirect funding through local training boards and private sector groups.

* priority for public post secondary sector will be to form new training partnerships with the private sector which includes opening ourselves up to community based partnerships.

* relationships with private training institutions needs to be improved. Public colleges are still seen as "monopolized systems that avoid competition" by the private colleges, and public colleges still view private colleges with scorn and resentment as they represent " profit motivated education".

* introduction of a competitive marketplace in training.

* colleges in delivering training must be responsive, flexible, competitive, open to partnerships, be open to competitive bidding and understand the implications of federal legislation/policy.

CONCLUSION

The sacred "institutional training program " that public colleges depended on for years to financially secure their bread and butter vocational training programs, has been significantly altered in its delivery and funding infrastructure. In its place, we have seen evolve, a delivery system with more flexibility, but at the same time a system that introduces greater possibility for training duplication between the federal and provincial governments. Many educators do not agree with this federal policy change and have continued to advocate that this change has deprived, betrayed and devalued the public post secondary vocational education system. This is made clear in the May 1991 occasional paper published by the B.C Vocational Instructors Association "A Betrayal of Faith: The Transformation of the British Columbia College System".

My sense of the direction in which public colleges need to focus, is to "buy in" to the new way the federal government wants to work with trainers. Public colleges can no longer assume a monopoly on training. We can no longer feel resentful about the preference of the federal government to contract with the private sector. What we have to do is learn to work with the private colleges, private trainers and voluntary organizations as training.
partners.

Many of us have seen the benefits of indirect or third party contracts. These contracts have helped us move closer to business, industry and community based voluntary groups, that so many colleges had distanced themselves from in recent years. But work still has to be done with private trade schools and private
training institutions in developing partnerships. We can't continue to be monopolized systems that avoid competition. This is where the federal government, and in particular Employment and Immigration, can help, in building better relations between the private and public colleges, just as it has already helped build a better synergistic relationship between business and labour.

Public colleges have an important role to play in promoting the "training culture" that is so desperately needed by the majority of Canadian employers. Public colleges cannot accomplish this advocacy for life long learning on their own. The public post-secondary system must work in partnership with private and voluntary groups
who also subscribe to this training ethic. Those colleges who choose to work alone in a training solitude will be the "losers"; those colleges that let go of some of the tradition and historical baggage and work in partnership with the private sector will be the "winners".

The need and demand for more and improved educational opportunity will continue to increase. There will continue to be major roles for providers of education, training, and retraining in the public sector, voluntary sector, and private sector. I am hearing and reading that the federal government and our B.C. provincial government see the core of the training strategy for Canadians to be a strong public sector, complemented by private and voluntary providers. For many of us working in the public sector post-secondary education field, a federal reaffirmation that public training institutions are important providers of training and have a major role in equipping Canada's labour force to meet the competitive challenge is needed and should be articulated.

References

Canadian Labour Force Development Board, *"A Proposal to Establish Local Labour Force Development Boards"*, November 1991.

Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre, *"Update on Trends in Federal Expenditures on Training and Enrolment in Federal Training Programs"*, Quarterly Labour Market and Productivity Review. Ottawa: Fall 1990.

College and Institute Educators Association of British Columbia *"Vocational Programs at Risk"*. April 1991. p. 7-21

Economic Council of Canada, Employment in the Service Economy. Ottawa: 1991. pp. 130 - 138.

Employment and Immigration Canada, Correspondence from Dan Henslowe, Chief Purchase of Training, Employment and immigration, B.C. Region, on B.C. Indirect Course Purchases 1990-1991. July 1991.

Employment and Immigration Canada, Strategic Policy and Planning (internal document) Enrolment in Government Sponsored Institutional Training Courses. August 1990.

Employment and Immigration Canada, Labour Market Development in the 1980's, (Dodge Report). Ottawa: 1980

Employment and Immigration Canada, *Success in the Works: A Policy Paper*. Ottawa: 1989

Federal Parliamentary Task Force (Allmand Task Force) *Work for Tomorrow: Employment Opportunities for the Eighties.* Ottawa: 1981.

Federal/Provincial/Territorial Training Agreements 1982-1985 and 1991-1992. Employment and Immigration Canada

Mutual Position of the Provinces and Territories, *"Partners for People"* A Human Resource Adjustment and development Strategy for the 1990's. November 1989.

Vocational Instructors Association of B.C. Occasional Paper, *"A Betrayal of Faith: The Transformation of the British Columbia College System"*. May 1991.

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE FOR JUNIOR COLLEGES AUG 07 1992

©Witter July 1992